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Some text and illustrations are lost through tight binding. This is a problem which we regret we have found unavoidable since we are only filming at the Victoria and Albert Museum those catalogues that cannot be found in other London locations.

MARY GALLERY

MARY CALLERY

October 21
November 15
1 9 5 2

CURT VALENTIN GALLERY

32 EAST 57 STREET • NEW YORK

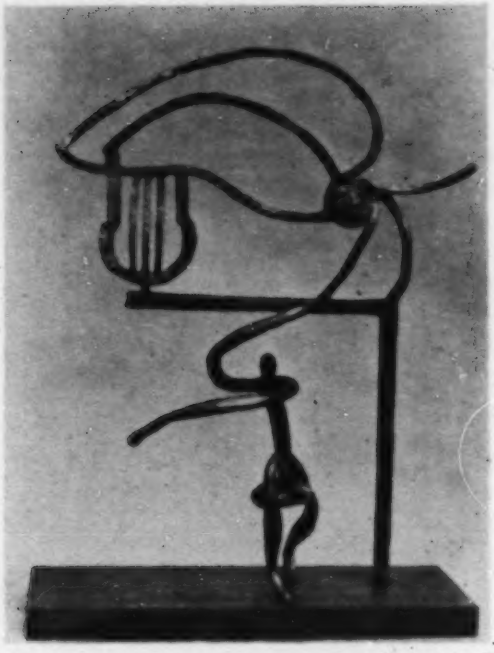

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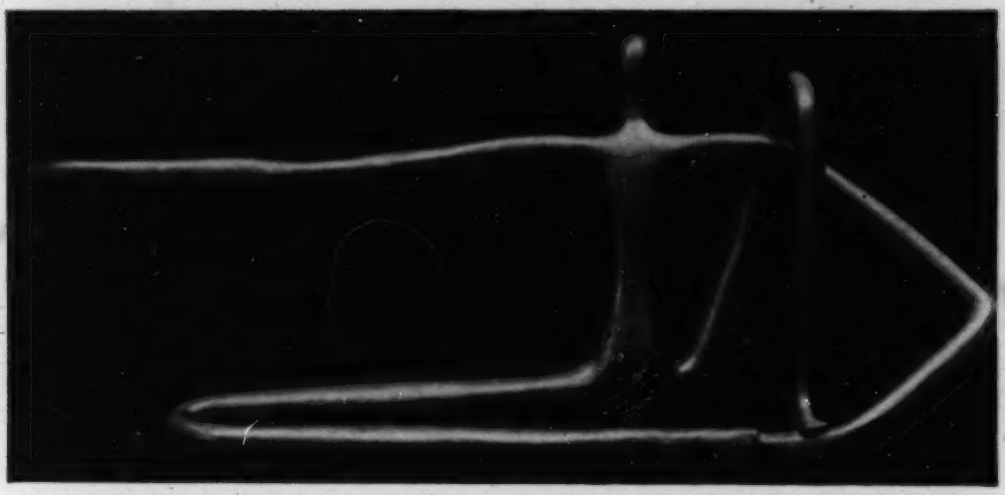
Illustration on cover: Orpheus

Catalogue No. 6
3. XI. 1952.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM LIBRARY



[2]

ANENT MARY CALLERY

by

HENRY McBRIDE

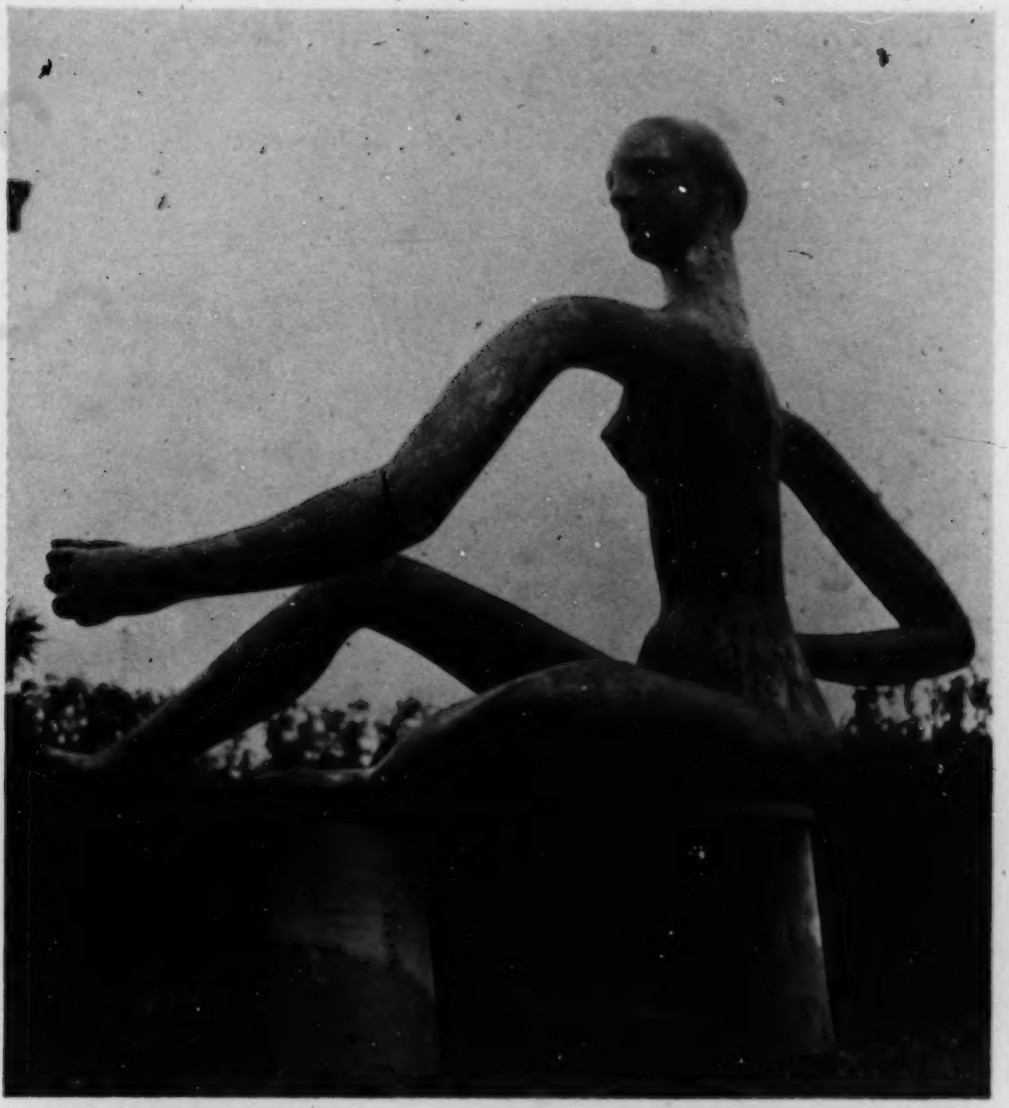
People who do not understand modern art are, quite simply, people who do not understand art or, to put it a trifle less belligerently, have an incomplete idea of art's office. For art is always on the change, just as life is, and because life is—yet guards the fundamentals upon which life and art rest, seeking more often than not, as the world grows older, to keep its expression to the simplicity and purity with which the world started (I mean "our world" as we know it—not the world of those preliminary fishes that Jacquetta Hawkes talks about). Art, as I must have said a thousand times in the course of a rather longish life, speaks to the imagination, where the values are constant, and not to uncertain knowledge—for who knows what knowledge is or if there

be such a thing at all, so quickly do the guide-books to it pass into oblivion!

The only real way to come to terms with poetic innovations in the arts is to live with them, and last winter for a while I practiced what I preach. Having found, by the grace of God, an apartment in New York, I discovered the space above the book-shelves to be too high for any of my pictures and yet seeming to call for something in the way of decoration. Mentioning this vacancy to Curt Valentin, he promptly lent me a Mary Callery bronze, one that figures in the present exhibition, the "Eurydice," and I thought, why not? I might have to write about it sometime, and I might as well get acquainted with it, never dreaming the test for me and "Eurydice" would come quite so soon. Yet here it is. "This is it," as the aviators say when facing imminent death.

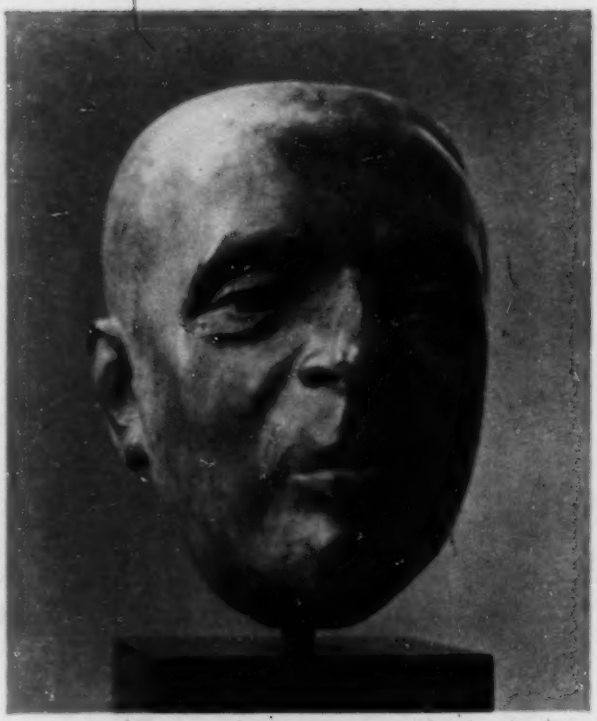
* * * *

The first thing this association brought me was the news that however difficult Mary Callery's art may be for art critics, it presents no difficulties at all for the usual healthy, happy, carefree private citizen for each one of such who entered my rooms last winter ignored the Marin and Miro watercolours and promptly fastened their gaze upon "Eurydice" saying, "What's that,"? and then adding after a moment's contemplation, "I like it." This I assure you was the typical behaviour. Even a few moments ago whilst engaged in writing this little piece, I was interrupted by a visit from a young couple, whose tastes in art were unknown to me, and who stared at the array of photographs of Mary Callery's



[14]

bronzes which were strewn about on my writing table to aid me in my task. Deciding I had better prepare my visitors a little, as I saw them edging curiously towards the photos, I hastily and warningly said, "Oh, these are very modern sculptures indeed." Both young people, having been carefully brought up, instantly



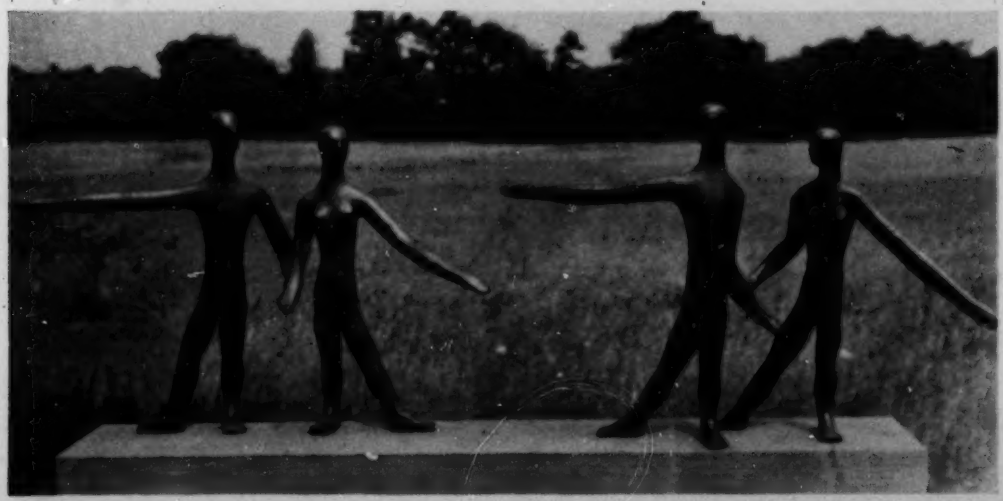
[3]

put expressions of disapproval on their faces; but the young husband who had chanced upon the photo of the "Young Diana" took only one quick look before he said, "Why, I like this." He seemed somewhat surprised at himself but honestly enthusiastic, and as the two young people were a happily married pair, this verdict settled the matter for both. They liked it. I did too, very much. Who wouldn't? To be sure the "Young Diana" is slim and her cavorting hunting dogs are slim too, but that's Mary Callery for you. Slimness is the keynote to her style, and what's wrong about that? I suspect she herself could not tell you what first started her upon the way she is now travelling as an artist—but there is no question but that slimness is a persistent feminine ideal.

For instance, the lady, whom I have always considered the best-dressed woman in America, although she has never allowed herself to be mentioned in the annually published list of the "best ten," is certainly slim enough to have posed successfully for a Lehmbruck statue, and it is the main reason why she has accommodated herself so easily to the dictates of the Parisian couturiers who, as even mere men have noticed, will have no traffic with fat ladies and never have had.

* * * *

But if it were only this dismissal of all excess baggage—this excessive slimness—these figure pieces of Mary Callery might not be so much, but actually there is more to it than that. It is not even an exclusively feminine device. It fits in with the architectural simplicities that have come upon the whole modernistic world and which, now that we have grown used to them, seem



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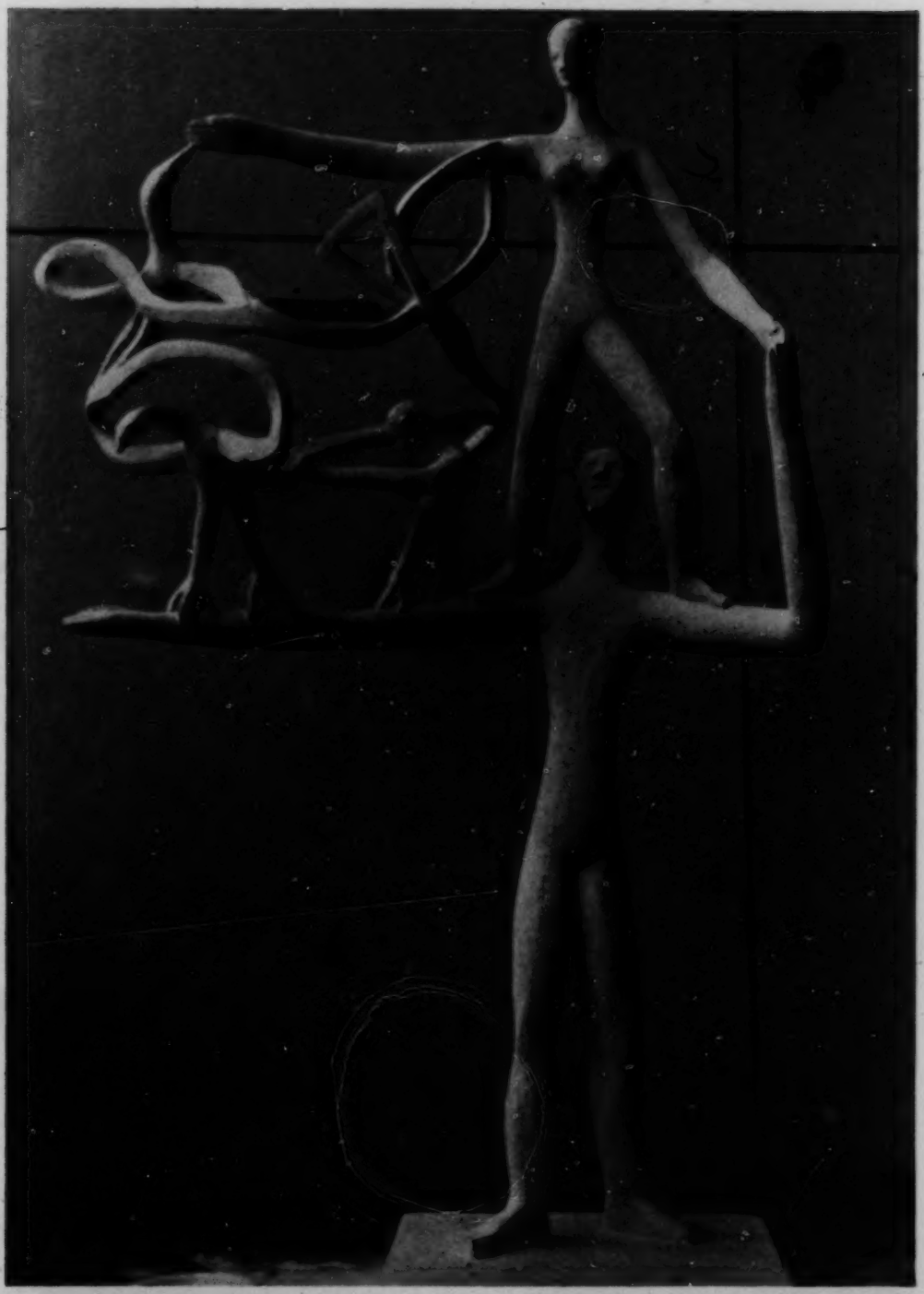
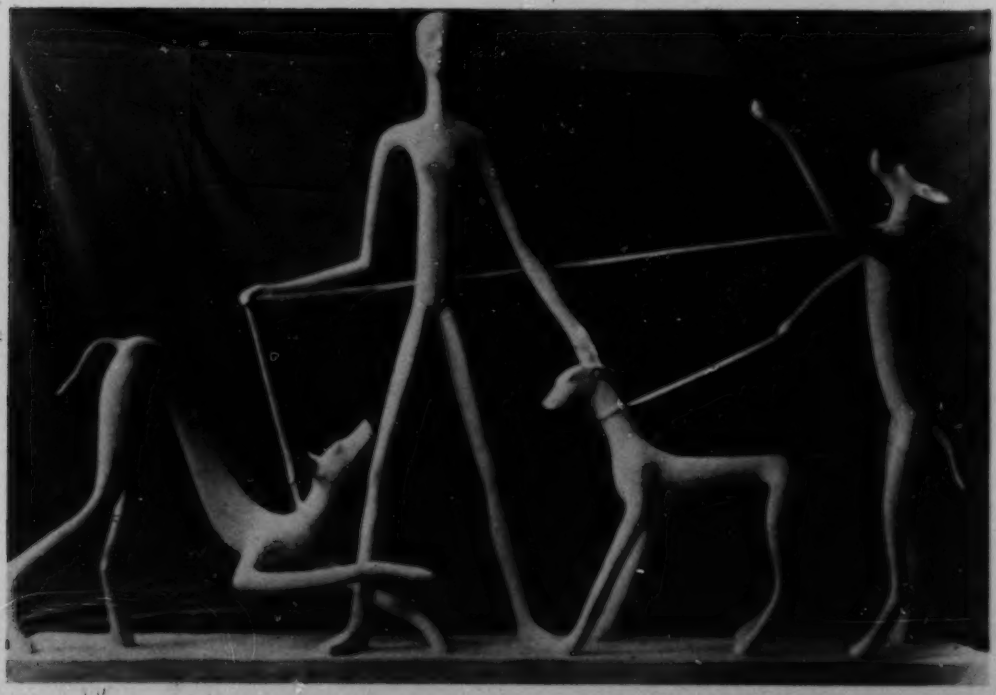


so peculiarly and precisely to mean "us." It provides us with our own kind of handsomeness and, yes, with our own kind of smartness. The "Young Diana," so I am told, is destined to go, in bronze to the Weiner House in Fort Worth, Texas, and can be, and I am sure will be, used at once as an argument in rebuttal to the outrageous aspersions in Edna Ferber's recently published book about "Texas." In this instance Texas has not waited to be told by others what is significant in contemporary art but calls the attention of all the other States to something they should know about.



CATALOGUE

1950–1952

1 Perhaps

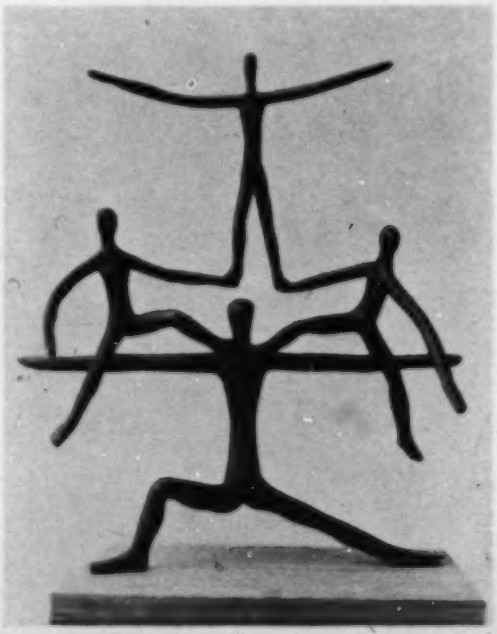
Bronze. H. 28"

2 Espaliered Figure

Bronze. H. 18" L. 40"

3 Portrait of J. B. Neumann

Bronze. H. 10½"



[1]

4 Four Figures

Bronze. H. 15" L. 37½"

5 Study for Orpheus

Bronze. H. 12¾"

6 Orpheus

Bronze. H. 39½"

7 Eurydice

Bronze. H. 20¼"

8 Piet

Bronze. L. 15¼"

9 Sleeping Dog

Marble. 8 x 13½"

10 A Summer Afternoon

Bronze. H. 5½"

11 Seated Figure with Dress

Bronze. H. 18½"

12 Study for Acrobats with Birds

Bronze. H. 17"

[18]

13 Acrobats with Birds

Plaster. H. 52"

14 Seated Figure

Bronze. H. 41"

15 St. Francis with Birds

Bronze. H. 12"

16 Study for a Monument

Bronze. H. 10"

17 Dog

Bronze. H. 30"

18 Yolanda

Terracotta H. 7½"

19 Piet

Terracotta L. 12½"

20 Study for Young Diana

Plaster. 5¼ x 16"

21 Study for Young Diana

Plaster. 5⅛ x 8"

22 The Young Diana

Plaster. 60 x 96"

LIBRARY